

Suzanna Windon

## Community Engagement Conference

**Extension Session Type:** - Presentation

**Proposal Title:** Identifying Target Audience for Future Extension Programming as a First Stage of Community Assessment

**Full Description of Proposal:**

**The information that will be presented in the session** will help to identify target audience for future Extension programs through the comprehensive examination of local community's demographics, resources, assets, capacities and citizens' needs. To know past and current trends is highly important when conducting community assessment, which allow us to identify future demand for Extension programming. Moreover, session audience will gain awareness of Raymond's (1987) approach of "*scanning the environment*" similar to community market analysis that will help to identify the target audiences, needs of clientele, and match Extension's programs with audience needs" (p.1). Participant will have 15-20 minutes activity called "Statistical indicators or screening community environment" that will help them generate the ideas and find possible solutions of future programming focus and target audience

For the purpose of this pilot study two counties in Ohio were selected for conducting community market analysis to identify current target audiences. Franklin County in Ohio represented urban county and Holmes County represented rural county. The initial step of this approach was secondary data analysis for Extension programs based on the comprehensive analysis of communities' trends, structure, gaps, and opportunities. Examination of existing data helped to identify social, economic, and cultural issues in community and target audiences. Secondary data analysis is a descriptive tool by nature and cannot be generalized to other context. On the county level it is essential to analyze the following major areas of community: demographic (age, gender, race, ethnicity, education, employment, household income, health insurance, veteran status, poverty level); commuting characteristics, health, labor market (through analyzing local agriculture, business, and industries), local County Extension resources, recent Extension programming efforts, non-formal (community) educational opportunities outside of Extension services, national, and local trends.

Numerous target audiences were identified for urban and rural counties. Each target audience represented specific group of citizens and issues that each group are facing when living and working in the community. Differences in the identified target audiences were found between urban and rural counties because of the discrepancies and specifics of the local socio-economic and cultural environment.

**Intendent audience is** Extension educators, community outreach professionals, and assessment and evaluation specialists.

**Expertise of presenter.** Presenter is an expert in community market research, community assessment, and program evaluation in the field of Agricultural and Extension Education.

### **Learning Objectives of the Proposal:**

1. Identify target audience and future Extension programming through analysis of community assets, resources, gaps, needs, and opportunities. These approach becomes an invaluable resource for better communication with local leaders, stakeholders, preparing grant proposals, and make Extension strategic program planning more successful.
2. Gain better understanding how to use statistical resources and statistical indicators that will give an approximation of community profile.

Also, Points for Consideration (two documents) will be offered for session participants

- a) A list of resources for secondary data analysis
- b) Market Research for Extension programming

### **Summary of the Proposal for Conference Program**

The findings from this pilot study and theoretical framework contribute to an integrative theory of community assessment and evaluation research in Agricultural Extension field. The research objective was to identify target audience for future Extension programming focus. The community market analysis approach was used identify the target audiences, needs of clientele, and match Extension's programs with audience needs. Two counties in Ohio (urban and rural) were selected for this pilot project. Numerous target audiences were identified for urban and rural counties and future Extension programming focus across six impact areas. Each target audience represented specific group of citizens and issues that each group were facing when living and working in the community. Differences in the identified target audiences were found between urban and rural counties based on specifics of the local socio-economic and cultural environment. The findings will be used by Extension educators to design future programs.

#### **Key words**

Community assessment, identifying target audience, community market analysis

### **How can others get involved with your initiatives or organization?**

Extension educators and community outreach professionals can use the community market analysis approach to receive an approximation of community profile and target audiences that will help the following: first, better communicate with local leaders and stakeholders; second prepare grant proposals; third, make Extension strategic program planning more successful; and fifth, not extensively rely on external financial aid.

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